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Quarterly Report
Second Quarter 2004

ACFA Program Undergoing State Audit

The Animal Care Facilities Act (ACFA) is currently undergoing a review by the State Auditor's Office. Originally limited to USDA/ACFA-licensed facilities, the scope has been broadened to include all facilities regulated by ACFA. Michael Monia, Senior Auditor, began the audit on June 2, 2004 and doesn't anticipate a final report to be released for several months.

"It is our hope that the findings of the audit will enhance our ability to function in an effective and efficient manner," said Dr. Eber, ACFA Program Veterinarian.

During the next few months, auditors will be evaluating inspector performance during actual inspections, comparing enforcement activity to that of USDA, and reviewing policies and procedures.

Audits, much like inspections, occur on a routine basis. An audit in 2003 found the ACFA program largely in compliance with the Missouri Sunshine Law. An audit in 2004 looked into the capabilities of the ACFA computer reporting program. The latest audit is focused on the procedures employed by ACFA staff and how the program compares with USDA overall. Four auditors and an intern are currently reviewing records provided by ACFA staff.

Dr. Eber Promotes Retiring Geriatric Dogs

Dr. Eber is asking that breeders and no-kill shelters work on moving older dogs out of kennels and into homes.

"Deteriorating facilities have shown somewhat of a recurring theme recently," Eber reports, "where kennel owners become overburdened by the cost and labor of keeping up with the needs of geriatric dogs."

The recurring theme that Dr. Eber mentions refers to several recent cases in which kennel owners, while not trying to harm their dogs, have retained ownership of the animals to a stage where they begin to show problems as a result of old age. Dr. Eber has used meetings and conferences to ask that individuals work with local shelters and rescues in retiring dogs before they become susceptible to climate extremes, are vulnerable to younger, more aggressive dogs, or are diagnosed as immunodeficient.

Most individuals cite emotional attachment in their reluctance to euthanize or give up older dogs, but there are certain economic and quality-of-life issues that owners should consider in determining what is best for themselves and their animals. Retiring dogs into homes may allow them to live longer, healthier lives. Breed specific rescues have found a demand for adult dogs, and a number of these organizations are currently working to retire dogs that have moved into the latter portion of their lives.

Canine Care Workshops Provide Continuing Education

Approximately 220 dog and cat professionals attended the Canine Care Workshops held during June and July. The workshops, designed to assist animal care enthusiasts in enhancing the health and well being of their dogs, are sponsored by the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Missouri-College of Veterinary Medicine. ACFA licensees were automatically mailed an invitation to attend workshops held in Kirksville and Joplin.

Topics covered during the workshops included zoonotic disease, microchip identification, socialization of puppies, pediatric medicine, transportation and respiratory disease. Speakers included veterinarians and technicians employed by the sponsoring agencies, as well as Dr. Dan Knox, Director of Companion Animal Operations with AVID Identification Systems, Inc. The workshops drew participants from Missouri, Iowa, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

The ACFA program encourages anybody with an interest in dogs to attend next year's workshops. Watch for next year's announcement in our quarterly reports.

Canine Dentistry on the Rise

An increasing number of kennel owners are realizing the positive benefits of cleaning their dog's teeth. Lack of proper dental care can lead to anorexia, oral hemorrhaging, and bacterial infection. By preventing these problems, kennel owners can ensure that their dogs live longer, healthier lives.

Under modern methods, dogs are anesthetized before a veterinarian or trained technician scales the dog's teeth, most often with the aid of an ultrasonic scaler. The purpose of the procedure is to remove plaque and tarter that build up on the teeth and gums. Plaque is a substance that forms on teeth after eating. Tarter is the hardened form of plaque. Without some type of intervention, tarter will continue to form until its invasion of the gums allows bacteria to enter the bloodstream and cause infection.

Several of Missouri's most progressive kennels are using canine dentistry as a means of improving the lives of their dogs. For more information on canine dentistry, licensees should contact their attending veterinarian. The ACFA program also recommends that breeders attend seminars of the Missouri Pet Breeders Association and the Professional Pet Association as a means of learning the latest methods for proper veterinary care.

Teeth cleaning may also affect your dog's behavior. Without proper cleaning, dogs may become aggressive, irritable, or reclusive as a result of soreness. They may avoid being touched around the face and may also exhibit less energy. It's important to remember that the domestic dog is long removed from its wild cousins, and the diet of the modern dog does little to remove plaque and tarter from teeth. Consider having your pet's teeth examined by a licensed veterinarian.

There are also other methods that you can use to contribute to your dog's oral health. Several commercial dog foods claim to reduce the incidence of periodontal disease. Chew toys, such as rawhide bones, aid in the control of tarter and plaque while providing environmental enrichment for your dog. Finally, there are some oral sprays and rinses that work for short periods of time.

Frequently Asked Question:

We are always open to questions. Through the use of this column, we hope to answer some questions that are commonly asked of our staff.

What recommendations are there for microchip users?

First of all, the practice of microchipping is one of the safest and easiest methods to permanently identify your pets. In addition, it is one of the most common methods of identification used in ACFA-licensed facilities.

While we strongly recommend that animals be microchipped as a means of reuniting lost pets with their owners, the ACFA program is reluctant to endorse one brand over another. There are, however, some factors that pet owners should take into consideration before implanting animals with the electronic identification.

First, there are at least six microchip frequencies in use. The predominant frequency used in companion animals operates at 125 kHz. FECAVA, HomeAgain and AVID all manufacture microchips that operate at this radio frequency.

Another factor to consider is the location at which the animal is to be implanted. The standard injection site within the United States is between the shoulder blades of the pet. Other countries may have different standards.

Finally, pet owners should consider the predominant microchip used in their area. A quick phone call to the local pound can reveal what type of microchips can be detected by your municipality's animal control. Using compatible technologies may save the life of your pet.

Census of ACFA Facilities

(As of June 29, 2004)

Commercial Breeders	1,505
Commercial Kennels	36
Boarding Kennels	131
Dealer/Broker	114
Pet Shops	79
Contract Kennels	16
Exhibitors	5
Hobby/Show Licensed	26
Hobby/Show Registered	262
Animal Shelters	69
Rescues	108
Municipal Dog Pounds	219
Pet Sitters	9
Intermediate Handlers	<u>9</u>
Total	2,588

Dual-Licensed Facilities

Dog and cat breeders within Missouri that harbor more than three intact females and sell to brokers, dealers, or pet stores are required to be licensed with the United States Department of Agriculture as well as the Missouri Department of Agriculture. These facilities are referred to as dual-licensed facilities and are required to maintain a license from both agencies.

Contact the USDA at:

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Mail Stop #3W11
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117

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Fall Golf Classic

The Missouri Department of Agriculture will be hosting their Fall Golf Classic on Saturday, September 11, 2004. The tournament benefits the Jefferson City Animal Rescue Center and the Brenna Siebert Memorial Pet Care Fund.

Animal lovers should consider supporting this event. Hole sponsorships are available for \$75.00 per hole and are used for prizes, the two charities and tournament costs. Door prize sponsorships are also available.

For more information, please contact:

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This is the department's 11th annual tournament. Last year's tournament raised \$1,400 for the charitable causes.

Compliance Activity

A commercial breeder in Moniteau County agreed to meet exempt status after demonstrating an inability to properly care for the number of dogs in his possession. Twenty-one dogs were sold to a licensed breeder. Ten dogs were released to a licensed contract kennel. The licensee had an inspection history of chronic non-compliance.

An unlicensed dog breeder in Callaway County agreed to give up nine dogs and find homes for five more in order to meet exempt status.

An animal rescue in Schuyler County was told to reduce the number of dogs until the facility had the proper capabilities to care for the number of animals under her care. Officials are monitoring this matter and consulting with the attending veterinarian.

An animal rescue in St. Francois County was told to reduce the number of dogs within two weeks or face sanctions by ACFA. The operator plans to maintain a license with fewer animals. Officials are monitoring this matter.

Per Capita Statistics for Pounds, Animal Shelters and Rescues

Each year, we receive Sunshine Law requests regarding the disposition of dogs received by municipal pounds, animal shelters and rescues. The following statistics reveal numbers provided by those entities during the 2003-2004 renewal period.

ACFA Designation	Received	Adopted	Euthanized	Returned to Owner
Animal Shelters	58,485	28,088	23,339	511
Pounds/Dog Pounds	94,479	24,435	39,919	793
Rescues	9,561	8,636	192	
TOTAL	162,525	61,159	63,450	1,304

Pet owners can increase the likelihood of their animal being returned by using proper identification, keeping a photograph of their pet on hand and ensuring that outdoor pens are properly maintained. Spaying or neutering your pet will reduce the number of unintended matings, a significant factor in owner relinquishment.